

[Press Release, Oct. 30, 2004]

**PRESIDENT BUSH SIGNS FALEOMAVAEGA'S BILL  
AND AGREES THAT AMERICAN SAMOA'S  
TROOPS SHOULD HAVE THE RIGHT TO VOTE**

Congressman Faleomavaega announced today that on the evening of October 30, 2004 President Bush signed into law H.R. 2010, a bill he introduced to restore the voting rights of American Samoa's troops and college students.

I made a promise that I would not rest until American Samoa's active duty military men and women and other overseas voters had the right to vote in federal elections held in our Territory, Congressman Faleomavaega said. And, today, I thank the President of the United States for signing my bill and supporting our troops.

American Samoa's military men and women have put their lives on the line time and time again and some have even given their lives for us to live in a free and democratic society. Now we have come together to thank them for their service by restoring their right to vote.

Governor Togiola, Lieutenant Governor Aitofele Sunia, the late and honorable President of the Senate, Lutu T. Fuimaono, and many other members of the Fono supported this historic legislation and I thank them for their support. More than 85% of those surveyed in American Samoa also agreed that our military men and women should have the right to vote and I thank you for your support, Faleomavaega said.

The U.S. House of Representatives and the United States Senate also unanimously supported H.R. 2010. In fact, not one Republican or Democrat in the House or Senate objected to my bill. This is because H.R. 2010 is the right thing to do.

H.R. 2010 includes both plurality and majority voting. If, for example, the American Samoa Legislature establishes primary elections, the general election for the office of the Delegate will be by majority. If the American Samoa Legislature fails to establish primary elections, the general election for the office of the Delegate will be by plurality. Either way, our military men and women and college students will have the right to vote for their Representative to the

United States House of Representatives, Faleomavaega said.

Also, H.R. 2010 in no way affects how the American Samoa Government chooses to elect its local leaders and this matter is not new to the people or the Legislature of American Samoa. The truth is this matter has been before the people and our local leaders for the past five years. Since 1998, I have written to our Governors, past and present. I have written and testified before our local Legislature and I have brought this matter to the attention of our people through press releases, newsletters, radio and tv programs. In 2001, I also conducted a Congressional survey and 85% of those surveyed agreed that American Samoa's active duty service members should be afforded the same rights and privileges as every other American serving in the U.S. Armed Forces.

Having made every change requested of me by our local leaders and after years of good-faith efforts on my part, I am pleased that H.R. 2010 has now been signed into law. As a result of the Presidents support, our military men and women and college students will now have the right to vote in federal elections held in American Samoa and they will no longer be disenfranchised from the process as a result of Public Law 95-556 which was passed on October 31, 1978.

Federal, or PL 95-556, requires a runoff election to be held only 14 days after the general election. As Governor Togiola said, this creates a situation where it is virtually impossible for American Samoa's Election Office to send out absentee ballots to the men and women in the military and expect to receive them back in time for those votes to be counted in a run-off election. In other words, this is an injustice that has been made worse by the current conflict in the Middle East where many American Samoans are now serving and fighting for democracy.

H.R. 2010 corrects the injustice and, for this reason, I am thankful that President Bush, the U.S. Senate, the U.S. House of Representatives, many of our local leaders and the people of American Samoa agreed with me that some measure should be put in place to assure that the votes of our military men and women are counted in federal elections held in American Samoa.

Again, I thank Senator Akaka, Chairman Pete Domenici and Ranking Member Jeff Bingaman of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources for supporting H.R. 2010. I also thank Chairman Richard Pombo and Ranking Member Nick Rahall of the House Committee on Resources for their support. Above all, I thank our military men and women from American Samoa who are fighting for democracy so that you and I and future generations may live in peace. As a Vietnam veteran, I wish them the very best and, as always, I pray for their safe return, the Congressman concluded.

---

**PERSONAL EXPLANATION**

**HON. TAMMY DUCKWORTH**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 2, 2014*

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. Speaker, on November 11, 2014, on Roll Call #516 on the Motion to Concur in the Senate Amendment to H.R. 4194—Government Reports Elimination Act, I am not recorded because I was absent for medical reasons. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA.

On November 12, 2014, on Roll Call #517 on H.Res. 748, Providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 5682) to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline, I am not recorded because I was absent for medical reasons. Had I been present, I would have voted NAY.

On November 13, 2014, on Roll Call #518 on the Democratic Motion to Recommit H.R. 5682, I am not recorded because I was absent for medical reasons. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA.

On November 13, 2014, on Roll Call #519 on H.R. 5682, to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline, I am not recorded because I was absent for medical reasons. Had I been present, I would have voted NAY.